

# THE SPREAD OF PRINTING

EDITED BY COLIN CLAIR



WESTERN HEMISPHERE

*The Caribbean Area*

## THE SPREAD OF PRINTING

*A history of printing outside Western Europe in monographs*

EDITED BY COLIN CLAIR

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THE SPREAD OF PRINTING

EDITED BY COLIN CLAIR

THE CARIBBEAN AREA

# THE SPREAD OF PRINTING

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

## *The Caribbean Area*

by

BRADFORD F. SWAN

1970

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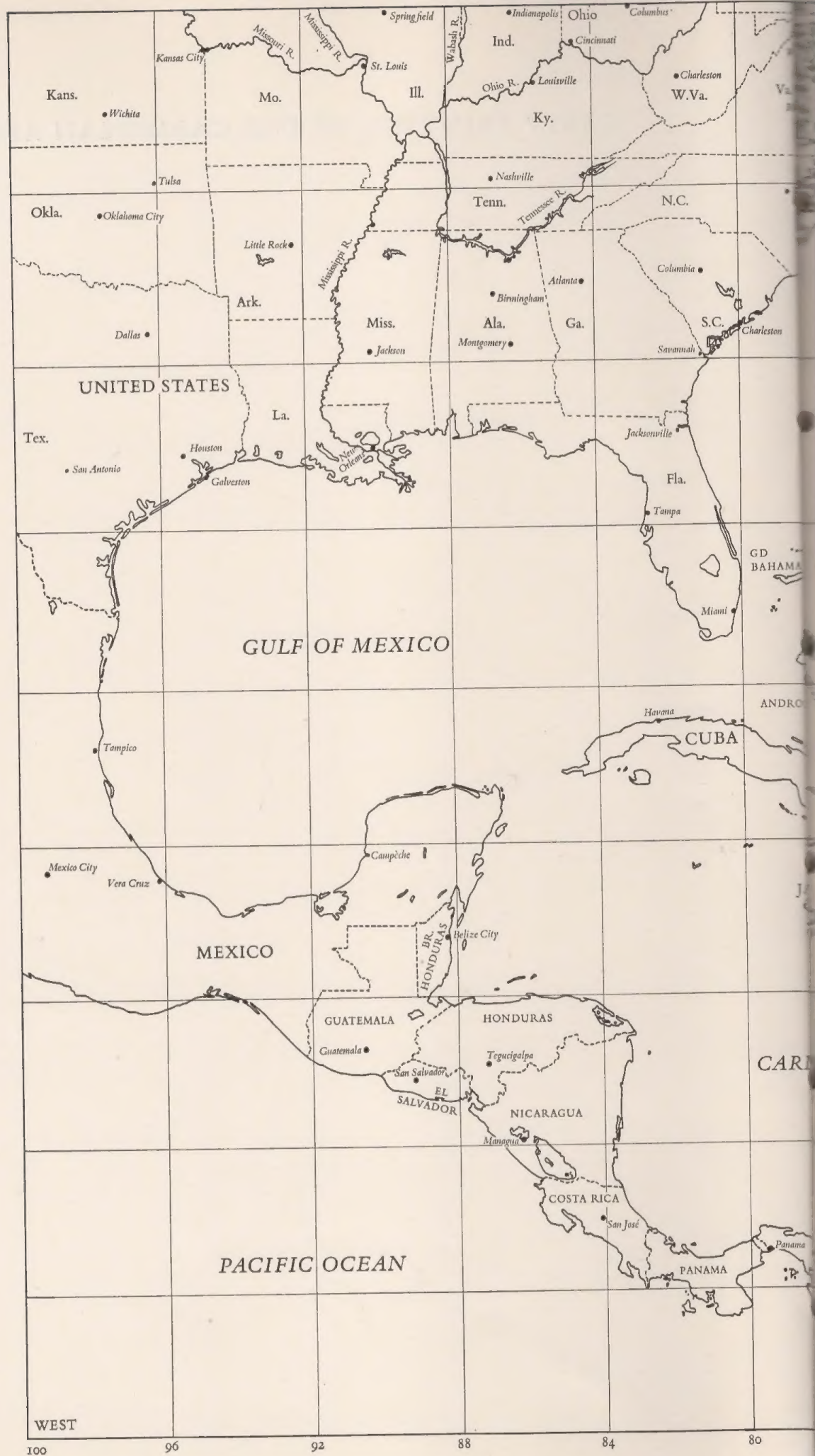
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EARLY PRINTING IN THE CARIBBEAN AREA





Islands mentioned in the text (in alphabetical order)

Name	sq. miles	km <sup>2</sup>
Antigua	108	280
Aruba	69	179
Bahama Islands	430	1,114
Barbados	166	430
Bermuda	14	36
Bonaire	95	245
Cuba	44,000	114,000
Curaçao	212	549
Dominica	291	753
Grenada	133	344
Gaudeloupe		
Grande Terre	255	682
Basse Terre	341	883
Hispaniola (Haiti or Santo Domingo)	28,000	72,500
Jamaica	4,207	10,896
Martinique	380	984
Montserrat	33	85
Saba	5	13
St. Eustace	8	21
St. Kitts	63	163
St. Lucia	233	603
St. Martin	38	98
St. Thomas	33	85
St. Vincent	140	362
Santa Cruz	84	221

## Early Printing in the Caribbean Area

### *Earliest beginnings in Hispaniola*

The Spanish were the first Europeans in the Caribbean and thus they were the first to use the press there. They did not do so, however, for many years after the first colonization, probably relying instead on any presses which were operating on the nearby mainland or having their printing done on official presses in Spain. This condition is characteristic of the repressive attitude of the Spanish administration at that time in the West Indies. This attitude was perfectly expressed, though for a different locality, by Governor Berkeley of Virginia, when he said, in 1671:

'I thank God that there are no free schools, nor printing, and I hope we shall not have, these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world, and printing had divulged them, and libels against the best of government. God keep us from both.'

Isaiah Thomas, still the best source for the history of early printing in the Caribbean,\* states of Santo Domingo (Hispaniola) that 'a printing press was early introduced into the Spanish part of this island, probably about the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was seldom used except for printing the lists and returns, and other papers for the different branches of the administration'. Thomas goes on to quote Moreau de St. Mery, in his *Description of the Spanish Part of St. Domingo*, as writing that 'no works concerning the colonies can be printed in them without the permission of the Council of the Indies, and it is well known that the Council is not over fond of granting such permission... If a work be printed at St. Domingo twenty copies of it must be delivered to the president, to be sent by him to the Council of the Indies, there to be buried, like everything else that is sent thither.'

\* Thomas, Isaiah: *The History of Printing in America*. 2nd. edn. Albany. 1874.

No more is known of this press. A similar claim for a seventeenth-century press, said to have been established at Santiago de Cuba in 1698, is made by Ambrosio Valiente in his *Tabla Cronologica de los sucesos ocurridos en la ciudad de Santiago de Cuba*, which was published in New York in 1853, but Henry Harrisse dismissed the claim, saying that 'we apprehend that no Cuban book of the Seventeenth Century can be produced'. Jose Toribio Medina supports this contention and offers as the earliest Cuban printing that he could find mentioned Francisco Gonzalez del Alamo's *Disertacion medica sobre que las carnes de cerdo son saludables en las Islas de Barlovento*, done at Havana in 1707, which was cited by the Mexican bibliographer, Beristain y Sousa.

Both Harrisse and Medina offer as the earliest Havana printing of which they were certain, *Meritos que ha justificado y probado el Ldv. D. Antonio de sossa*, printed at Havana in 1724 by Carlos Habré. Medina adds that '...no cabe duda de que el primer impresor que hubo en la Habana fue un francés llamado Carlos Habre'.

The *Meritos* was cited by Antonio Bachiller y Morales in his *Apuntes para la Historia de las Letras, y de la Instruccion publica de la Isla de Cuba*, which was printed at Havana in 1861, but in a footnote that author stated that 'una carta de esclavitud a la Virgen Santisima de Rosario, sin nombre de impresion' had been printed at Havana in 1720, but except for this vague reference and the mention by Beristain y Sousa of the *Disertacion medica* no Cuban printing done before 1724 is known.

### *Jamaica*

The earliest existence of the press elsewhere in the West Indies also dates from 1720, according to Thomas. He wrote that a press was established on the island of Jamaica about 1720, 'and within one or two years after a newspaper was published at Kingston'. He goes on to state that *The Weekly Jamaica Courant* 'was published at Kingston as early as August, 1722, and as late as 1755, on a sheet of demy, folio; but the exact time at which the publication commenced or closed, I cannot ascertain'.

Thomas gives no names in writing of this early Jamaica press, and the earliest printer identified by Frank Cundall, in his extremely thorough *The Press and Printers of Jamaica Prior to 1820*, originally a paper prepared for the American Antiquarian Society, which carried his researches down to 1916, was one John Letts, who produced a sheet almanac in 1734. It is extremely likely, however, that printing was done on the island prior to this date, as Thomas says, for from 1721 onward the

House of Assembly periodically empowered its speaker or its clerk to have its votes or its minutes printed.

We have only two clues as to who might have been printing in Jamaica during this period, the third decade of the eighteenth century. In 1730 the Assembly authorized its clerk to have two books bound, and if he could not find anyone to do it in Spanish Town to take them to a Mrs. Baldwin in Kingston 'to get them new bound'. Cundall believed that Mrs. Baldwin was a bookseller and stationer and not necessarily a binder or printer, but it is an interesting coincidence that Samuel Keimer pointed out, about this time, in his newspaper at Barbados, that the official printer at Jamaica, a woman, was able to afford a coach to ride around in.

Probably Mrs. Baldwin was the mother of Peter and Robert Baldwin, for whom John Letts printed a piece entitled *A Letter from Don Thomas Geraldino in answer to Don Blas de Lezos at Carthagen* in 1740; this is the second earliest Jamaica printing which has survived.

Cundall has traced carefully the history of Jamaica printing from the middle of the eighteenth century to 1820, the terminal date of his essay. Small bits of information continue to be added to his record. A very few printers unknown to him can be named, and a small number of early Jamaica imprints can be added to the list he drew up in 1916.

It seems likely, for instance, that *The Tryal of Sir Chalonier Ogle, 1742*, printed at Spanish Town, was done in that year or shortly afterward. William Daniell, printer and bookseller, produced a printing of the votes of the House of Assembly in 1749, and in 1750, he printed John Williams' *An Essay on the bilious, or Yellow fever of Jamaica...* 'at the New general printing office, the corner of Water-lane in King-street, near the court house'. Cundall lists Daniell as the printer, also in 1750, of *The Merchant's Pocket Companion, or an Almanack* for 1751. This is the earliest book almanac of Jamaican origin that has survived. Ten years later someone printed at Jamaica for James Forsyth, bookseller and stationer in Kingston, *An Almanack and Register, For Jamaica, For the Year, 1760...*

Also, we are able to add to Cundall's list of book almanacs editions for 1767, printed at Kingston by Weatherby & McCann, a firm and a printer (McCann) unknown to Cundall; for 1775, printed at Kingston 'by Joseph Weatherby in Harbour Street'; and for 1787, *the Royal Almanack and Register*, printed at Kingston by Alexander Aikman, 'Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty'.

Almanacs were probably produced with reasonable regularity from the middle of the century onward, although there are long gaps in the ranks of surviving copies until the 1780s and 1790s.

### *Newspapers and Government Printing*

The demand for newspapers in the West Indies seems to have been heavy, and on this score Jamaica was no exception; fifteen newspapers had been started in Jamaica before 1800 and four more began publication during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. These newspapers were printed at Kingston and St. Jago de la Vega (Spanish Town), the two principal centres of printing on the island, and at Falmouth, Montego Bay, and Savanna-la-Mar. With all these newspapers operating at one time or another during the eighteenth century it is small wonder that we are able to list no fewer than forty printers who worked on the island in that century.

Nor was the situation in regard to newspapers in Jamaica in any way unique. During that century Antigua had no fewer than four newspapers, three of them operating simultaneously during one period; Grenada had four; St. Kitts, Martinique, and Haiti, each three; there were two on Barbados and Dominica; and the Bahamas, Bermuda, and Santa Cruz had one each. By 1810 there were two on St. Thomas, and St. Vincent got one in 1826.

Necessary as the revenue from newspaper publishing may have been to the printers, it was the government printing business which was the most lucrative. The rewards of being printer to the assembly or to the colony government were comparatively great. Considering the relatively large number of presses, and the stiff competition this situation must have brought about, to do the government's printing must have meant, in many instances, the difference between business success and failure. For instance, David Douglass, the actor who retired from the stage and did a great deal of official printing for the Jamaica House of Assembly in the 1780s, died in 1786; three years later the Assembly paid his widow, Mary Douglass, for 'printing business', £1,399.4.6. Alexander Aikman was paid £4,000 'on account of printing' in 1797.

AN  
**ALMANACK**  
AND  
**REGISTER,**

FOR  
**J A M A I C A,**

FOR  
**The Y E A R, 1760.**

CONTAINING,  
**A List of the Honourable the**  
COUNCIL and ASSEMBLY, the CUS-  
TODES, and other Civil OFFICERS,  
&c. &c. &c.



**J A M A I C A:**  
Printed for JAMES FORSYTH, Bookseller and  
Stationer, in Kingston.

Jamaica, 1759-60 (actual size)

## Barbados

The influence of Benjamin Franklin in the spread of printing in the West Indies is an interesting facet of the history of the press there. Not only did he send the first printer and his equipment to the island of Antigua in 1748, and make his nephew that first Antiguan printer's successor, but he was, in an odd way, responsible for the establishment of the press in Barbados.

In December, 1728, Samuel Keimer began publishing a newspaper in Philadelphia, but after nine months he had not succeeded in enrolling even a hundred subscribers. Accordingly he sold out to Franklin and departed for the West Indies. Both Franklin and a printer named David Harry had worked in Keimer's shop. When he left Philadelphia Keimer sold his press and types to Harry. For a time Franklin feared that Harry might prove to be stiffer competition than Keimer had been, but it soon developed, according to Franklin, that 'Harry lived extravagantly, pursued amusements, neglected business, and business neglected him'. The upshot of this combination of circumstances was that Harry, too, packed up and went off to the West Indies.

Settling in Barbados, Harry encountered his old employer, Keimer, and it undoubtedly gave him a sort of perverse pleasure to hire Keimer as a journeyman when he began printing at Barbados in 1730. Having, by his skilful competition, driven two rivals to the West Indies, Franklin was content to sit back and let them fight it out. Keimer eventually acceded to Harry's business, for, according to Isaiah Thomas, Harry's moral fibre proved to be no stronger in the Caribbean than it had been beside the Schuylkill; 'on the contrary', Thomas remarks, 'Harry became more dissipated, and his profits from printing were not equal to his expenditures'.

Harry had established his printing office in Bridgetown. When he hired Keimer it led Franklin to observe that 'the master became the journeyman of his former apprentice'. But, as Thomas noted, this condition did not prevail for long and within a few months Harry failed and sold his printing equipment to Keimer. In 1731, at Bridgetown, Keimer began printing *The Barbadoes Gazette*, the first newspaper published, as Thomas says, 'in the Caribbee islands and the first known to have been published twice a week, for any considerable time, in any part of America'. In *Caribbeana*, a selection of articles, poems, and other pieces which had appeared in *The Barbadoes Gazette* and were being reprinted in London in 1741, we can find several clues as to the date of first publication of this newspaper. In the issue of Saturday,

November 20, 1731, a subscriber wrote 'the Author' of the newspaper that 'I am one of those who, from the Beginning, were pleased with your Proposals for publishing a Weekly Paper, and with the Assurances you have since given in your Gazette...' Also, the issue for December 11, 1731, was No. 10, indicating that the newspaper must have been started in the autumn of that year.

Keimer continued in business until 1738, but he died soon after that date. The paper was continued, however, by his successors, who brought it out only once a week. The likeliest candidate as Keimer's successor is William Beeby, who printed William Duke's *Some Memoirs of the first settlement of the island of Barbados and other [of] the Carribbee islands* in 1741.

In 1762 George Esmand & Company began to print at Bridgetown and published the *Barbadoes Mercury* 'at the new Printing-Office, in Back-Church Street'. The price of the paper was 'One Pistole per Annum'. With Esmand & Co. established at Bridgetown it is somewhat puzzling that Matthias Holst of that town would have sent to London to have John Dollond's almanac for 1765 printed, but such was the case; perhaps some dissatisfaction with the local printers had arisen. At any rate the Esmand firm was reasonably busy in 1766, producing in that year *Candid Observations on Two Pamphlets lately published, Viz. 'An Address to the Committee of Correspondence in Barbados.'*—*By a North-American... By a Native of Barbados, and A Letter To The North American, and An Essay Towards the Vindication Of The Committee of Correspondence In Barbados... By a Barbadian* [Rev. Kenneth Morrison].

The year following this spate of pre-Revolutionary pamphleteering, William Walker joined Esmand and they printed John Singleton's *A General Description of the West Indian Islands...*, which was written in verse. For succeeding years, at least through 1771, the firm was Esmand & Walker. Walker died in 1773. There was still a press on Barbados in 1798, when for some reason Henry Thornhill's *A Narrative of the Insurrection and Rebellion in the Island of Grenada* was printed there; it is possible that the rebellion which began in March, 1795, had left the Grenada printers unable to carry on their trade or had driven them from that island.

**A**  
**NARRATIVE**  
**OF THE**  
**INSURRECTION**  
**AND**  
**REBELLION**  
**IN THE**  
**ISLAND OF GRENADA,**  
**FROM THE**  
**COMMENCEMENT TO THE CONCLUSION.**

**INTRODUCED WITH A SUMMARY DIS-**  
**COURSE ON THE EXCELLENCE OF THE**  
**BRITISH CONSTITUTION. &c.**  
**BY HENRY THORNHILL ESQUIRE.**

---

**NON JAM SUNT MEDIOCRES HOMINUM LIBIDINES, NON HUMANÆ AUDACIÆ AC**  
**TOLERANDÆ. NIHIL COGITANT NISI CÆDEM, NISI INCENDIA, NISI RAPINÆ.**  
**CIC. IN CATIL 2d.**

**THE PASSIONS OF MEN ARE AT THESE TIMES BEYOND BOUNDS. HUMAN AUDACI-**  
**TIES ARE NOT TO BE BORNE WITH. THEY BREATHE NOTHING BUT BLOOD, FIRE**  
**AND RAPE.**

**BARBADOS.**

**PRINTED AT MR. GILBERT RIPPET. IN THE BAY,**  
**BETWEEN THE TWO BRIDGES.**

---

**1798.**

## Antigua

The fate which David Harry suffered at Barbados in 1730 and 1731 also seems to have afflicted the man Franklin sent to the West Indies fifteen years later to set up a printing office on Antigua. By that time the press was firmly established at Jamaica and St. Kitts, as well as on Barbados, but Franklin saw a chance for good business at St. John's, Antigua, the seat of government for the Leeward Islands, and consequently he sent Thomas Smith to the island in 1748. Smith had worked for Franklin in Philadelphia and at Franklin's branch office in New York under James Parker.

Franklin wrote to his friend William Strahan in London that Smith was 'a very sober, honest, and diligent young man', and it is true that Smith did succeed in establishing a weekly newspaper, the *Antigua Gazette*, and a reasonably successful business. But, four years later, when he was sending his favourite nephew, Benjamin Mecom, down to Antigua to take the place of the deceased Thomas Smith, Franklin wrote to his sister, Mecom's mother, that 'my late partner there enjoyed perfect health for four years, till he grew careless and got to sitting up late in taverns, which I have cautioned Benny to avoid...' He went on to say that Mecom would 'find the business settled to his hand, a newspaper established, no other printing-house to interfere with him, or beat down his prices', and so forth.

But these idyllic conditions were not to endure for long, and soon young Mecom was confronted with competition from Samuel Jones and possibly from Richard Offey. At any rate, Mecom was irked at the arrangements by which he was to pay off his uncle and by the end of 1756 he had returned to the mainland, settled his debt with Franklin, and taken his press to Boston.

Thomas Smith printed at Antigua in 1749 William Shervington's *Occasional Poems*, the first printed Antiguan book that has been discovered. Smith also printed blank forms, one of the staples of any eighteenth-century printer's business, but most important of his press's products was *An Essay Upon Plantership*,...which appeared in 1750. The first edition bore only the information that it was written 'By an Old Planter', but actually the author was Samuel Martin, one of Antigua's most successful and respected plantation owners. Martin's book became something of a best-seller, and Smith brought out a second edition in the same year as the first. It was subsequently printed at Antigua in 1756 by Samuel Jones, 'at the New-Printing-Office', and a fourth edition, of which no copy is known to have survived, was printed at Antigua by Samuel Clapham sometime before 1765, when a London reprint

of it was published for A. Millar. Some Antiguan printer who did not bother to put his name on the title-page brought out what he termed the Sixth Edition of the Martin work in 1767, and Robert Mearns brought out a Seventh Edition in 1785. There is indication that Martin's work was reprinted at Jamaica in 1802, although Cundall could locate no copy. Certainly the book had a remarkable sale over a half-century, going through eight or nine editions in that period.

Although Antiguan printing, like all West Indian imprints of an early date, is remarkably scarce today, the present writer was able to list thirty-two titles when he examined the subject several years ago and since then another title has been added and three or four titles known only by advertisements or similar mention have been located. Most interestingly, these were the work of ten or eleven printers. Mecom probably had Samuel Jones as a competitor before he left the island in 1756. Richard Offtey also printed a Militia Act at his press on Thibou's Wharf at St. John's that year. In 1763 one Edward Hughes printed William Shervington's *Miscellanies*, and at some time about this period Samuel Clapham must have been printing on the island.

Alexander Shipton was the printer of *An Act of Assembly, Passed in the Island of Antigua, 1766*. Two years later Robert Mearns produced a sheet almanac for James Alley and Company; this is the earliest instance of an Antiguan almanac that has been noted.\* Mearns was possibly the island's most successful printer; certainly he was in business there longer than any other printer, from at least 1768 until 1785 or later. He printed a funeral sermon preached on the death of Nathanael Gilbert in 1774. In 1775 he brought out *A short Treatise on the Slavery of Negroes in the British Colonies...* by Samuel Martin, Senior, in which that writer argued that the negroes were 'much happier than in their Native Country, happier than the Subjects of Arbitrary Governments, and at least as happy as the Poor Labourers of Great Britain and Ireland'. The price of this twelve-page pamphlet was 'two bitts'.

Shipton had been a publisher of the *Antigua Gazette* and Mearns took over the newspaper from him; he was still printing it in June, 1785, when he advertised in it a Masonic tract which could be obtained of him at the Gazette office or from a Mr. McDonough at the Post-Office. This brings up a puzzling situation; there was a so-called Post-office Press operating on Antigua in 1781, when it printed a legal paper

\* Since this was set in type two earlier almanacs, for 1762 and 1764, have been discovered; although obviously printed at Antigua neither one bears a printer's name.

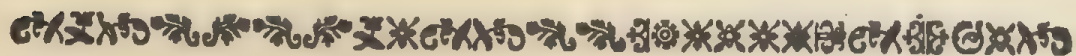
A · N  
O D E  
O N T H E  
K I N G O F  
P R U S S I A.

---

-----clarum & venerabile Nomen  
Gentibus, & multum nostræ quod proderat Urbi.

LUCAN: L. 9:

---



*A N T I G U A*: Printed at the Printing-Office on the Parade, 1760.

OCCASIONAL

*Wm. Brown 1749 p. 1 c. 6.*

P O E M S

*Wm. Brown 1749 p. 1 c. 6.*

---

*Primum ego me illorum, dederim quibus esse poetas,  
Excerptam numero* HOR.

---



---

ANTIGUA:

Printed by T. SMITH, for the AUTHOR.

---

MDCCXLIX.

in the lawsuit of Baijer vs. Baijer, but these two slim clues to its existence are all that we have. On the other hand it was becoming increasingly common for things to be printed *for* a seller or publisher without any printer's name appearing on the work. Thus, after Mearns' demise the *Gazette* was printed *for* William Collins, the Gazette printing-office turned out a 1791 almanac *for* John Johnston, and vol. I, no. 2 of the *Antigua Chronicle*, which appeared in January, 1781, was printed 'for the Post-Master'. James Hargrove was its printer in 1786. The *Antigua Journal* was being published as early as 1788, according to Vere L. Oliver, the historian of Antigua. It was still in publication as late as 1799 when, there is reason to believe, it was being printed by John Hardcastle. He was the printer of *An Act More Effectually to Provide for the Support and to Extend Certain Regulations for the Protection of Slaves; To Promote and Encourage their Increase, and generally to Meliorate their Condition*. This appeared in 1799 and is doubtless the piece advertised in the *Antigua Journal* of October 22, that year, as The Melioration Act, 'For sale at this office.' If so, we can now identify John Hardcastle as the hitherto unknown printer of the *Antigua Journal*, at least in the last years of the century.

Just why so many printers worked in the West Indies during the last three-quarters of the eighteenth century is hard to say. We know the fate of men like David Harry and Thomas Smith, who came to the islands and stubbed their toes in what is supposed to be the classic manner of the white man in the tropics. But we do not know what made them move about so often—unless it was the search for a better thing somewhere else.

But printers did stream through the islands, sometimes moving from place to place, as did Samuel Jones, who was printing at Antigua in 1755 and two years later was putting out a newspaper at Basseterre, on nearby St. Christopher, now St. Kitts, before moving on to London where, according to Isaiah Thomas, he died in 1762, after an illness of eight days, of inflammation of the lungs. Edward Hughes, who printed at Antigua in 1763, shows up nine years later in Charleston, South Carolina, as a proprietor, with Thomas Powell and Peter Timothy, of the *South-Carolina Gazette* for three months before his death in July, 1772.

One drifting West Indies printer had a particularly fascinating career. David Douglass, mentioned earlier, is said to have been a printer when he migrated from England to Jamaica in 1750, but somehow he became associated with Lewis Hallam in the theatrical enterprise known as Hallam's Virginia Comedians. After Hallam's

death in Jamaica David Douglass married his widow and took the company to the mainland in 1761, presenting theatrical performances at Williamsburg, Newport, and Providence the following year. When theatrical performances were generally banned in the mainland colonies in 1774 Douglass returned to Jamaica and re-entered the printing business. He was appointed to two judicial posts, served as King's Printer in Jamaica, had all the official business of the House of Assembly, and died extremely rich.

### *Other Islands*

While printers seemed to proliferate at Jamaica and Antigua, other islands had only a few. Just one, J. Stockdale, who established a printing house a short time before 1784, when *The Bermuda Gazette* was founded, has been listed by Thomas as working in Bermuda during the eighteenth century. John Wells, a printer from Charleston, South Carolina, went to Nassau, Bahama Islands, after the peace in 1783 and established *The Royal Bahama Gazette* there.

Printing was begun on Dominica in 1765 by William Smith, who first published *The Freeport Gazette; or, The Dominica Advertiser* at Roseau in that year. Two years later Smith printed *The Shipwreck*, a poem in three parts, 'By a Sailor, addressed to his Royal Highness the Duke of York. Price Two Dollars.' An unidentified printer put through the press at Roseau in 1772 *An Act for laying a Tax on Woodland, Dominica*. Thomas says there was a French and English newspaper being published on Dominica in 1775 'by one Jones.' That same year *An Act of the Legislature of the Island of Dominica for establishing courts of common pleas, error, King's bench and grand sessions of the Peace* was printed at Roseau. Another possible Roseau imprint is *A Diary of the Defence of the Island of Dominica, against the Invasion of the French Republicans, & the Revolt of the Dominicans of the Quarter of Colyhaut, in June 1795*. This was signed by Robert Browne, 'Volr. in Cl. Daniell's Div. of Hamilton's Corps. Roseau, Dominica, 3d December 1795'.

Grenada, on the other hand, had several printers who worked in both French and English. Thomas says that *The Royal Grenada Gazette* first appeared at Georgetown in January, 1765, 'on a crown sheet, folio, printed with new small pica and long primer types by William Weyland at the New Printing-Office'. He goes on to say

T H E  
L A W S,  
O F T H E  
LEGISLATURE,  
*Of the ISLANDS of*  
GRENADA AND THE GRENADINES,

FROM THE FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEGISLATURE, TO THE  
DISSOLUTION OF THE LAST ASSEMBLY, ████ ON THE FIFTH  
DAY OF SEPTEMBER, *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Four.*

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VOLUME I.

This VOLUME contains *only* such LAWS as are now in FORCE.

---



G R E N A D A :  
PRINTED BY AND FOR WILLIAM WAYLAND.  
MDCCLXXIV,

that there were 'two printing houses on this island, and one of them was established some years before Weyland's'. The Grenada printer's name was spelled Wayland in *Laws of the Legislature*, 'Printed by and for William Wayland' in 1774.

In 1779, after the capture of the island by a force commanded by Comte d'Estaing, Alexandre Midleton was printing books in French at Saint-George, Grenade. That year he issued *Relation de la Prise de la Grenade* and *Relation du Combat Naval de la Grenade, Donné entre l'Armée du Roi & celle du Roi d'Angleterre, le 6 Juillet, 1779*. Although a 1798 account of events on the island was printed at Barbados, in 1795 there was a press on Grenada; that year T. T. Wise's *A Review of the Events which have happened in Grenada from the commencement of the insurrection to the 1st of May: by a sincere well-wisher to the Colony*, was printed at St. George. This Grenada printer may have been Mathew Gallagher, who printed the *Weekly Courant, and Charibbee Advertiser* 'at St. George's, in Halifax Street, three doors from the Parade', in the early months of 1794. Gallagher advertised, in the issue for February 20, 1794, a pocket almanac for that year as 'on Saturday will be published ...and to be had of the Printer hereof—Price One Dollar'. The fact that Gallagher had not issued his almanac until the year was nearly two months gone may indicate that he had only recently set up shop in St. George's.

Although the *Laws of Montserrat from 1668 to 1778* was printed probably somewhere in the Caribbean area in 1780, no early printer at Montserrat is known. Likewise, although Thomas says that *The Royal Danish American Gazette* 'was issued from the press at Christiansted before 1770', and that 'printing was not introduced into this island [i. e. Santa Cruz] long before the publication of this paper', we do not know the name of the printer or any more facts about his press. Thomas is again our authority for stating that printing was performed in Surinam at Paramaribo 'before the year 1775'. The Dutch, he says, 'also introduced the press at their islands of Curaçao and St. Eustatius'.\* In 1793, however, it seems probable that there was a printer on St. Eustatius, for when Samuel Augustus Mathews felt it necessary to write a reply to J. B. Moreton's *Manners and Customs of the West India Islands* he took it to Edward L. Low & Co. to have it printed. Mathews' book, *The Lying Hero or an Answer to J. B. Moreton's Manners and Customs in the West Indies*, bears the imprint: 'St. Eustatius, Printed by Edward L. Low & Co. For the Author. 1793' but Low was

\* See p. 37

a printer at Basseterre, St. Kitts, in 1785 and 1790, and it is difficult to explain why he had moved his press to St. Eustatius in 1793 when St. Kitts had always been such an active centre of printing for nearly three decades.

Daniel Thibou was printing the *St. Christopher's Gazette* at Basseterre as early as November 2, 1765, according to an exchange article in the *Newport Mercury* for December 9 of the same year. Thomas says, however, that Thomas Howe was probably the first printer at Basseterre. The press, Thomas says, was brought to the island as early as 1746 and may have been introduced as much as two or three years before that. He said there were two printing houses established on the island before 1775, but it seems that there must have been more than two printers working there in those years. For, in addition to Howe and Thibou, there is a record that Samuel Jones, who had opened the 'New-printing-Office' in 1755 or 1756 at St. John's, Antigua, was a printer and the postmaster at Basseterre by 1757, and that Edward Dubson was in the printing business at Basseterre some time after 1767.

We do know that Thibou printed *Acts of Assembly...St. Christopher,... 1711 to 1769* at St. Christopher's in 1769, and according to the evidence of the *Newport Mercury's* columns, he had taken over the *St. Christopher's Gazette* by 1765. Thomas states only that the *Gazette* was continued until 1775, but does not say whether it had changed hands. Howe was still printing at St. Christopher's, however, in 1780 when he produced *An Essay on the Reduction of Interest*. Edward Luther Low had taken over the *St. Christopher's Gazette* by November 19, 1785, when No. 693 of that newspaper was printed by him 'in Cayon-Street, No. 84'. We know of three books printed by Low at St. Christopher's in 1790: Richard Nisbet's *The Source of Virtue; a Poem*; Temple Henry Croker's *Where Am I? How Came I Here?...;* and J. Peterkin's *A Treatise on Planting from the origin of semen to ebullition... The Second Edition*.

Joseph Berrow printed *The Laws of the Island of Saint Vincent and its Dependencies, From the first Establishment of a Legislature to the End of the Year 1787*. He produced this work in 1788 with the imprint: 'Saint Vincent: (By Authority of the Legislature) Printed by Joseph Berrow, MDCCLXXXVIII.' Other printings of laws of St. Vincent occurred annually from 1792 to 1799.

Although two pieces of printing, both almanacs, bearing the imprint 'Castries,

**THE**  
**LYING HERO**  
**OR**  
**AN ANSWER TO**  
**J. B. MORETON'S**  
**MANNERS and CUSTOMS in the WEST INDIES.**  
**by**  
**SAMUEL AUGUSTUS MATHEWS.**

---

ST. EUSTATIUS,  
Printed by EDWARD L. LOW & Co.  
For the Author.

1793.

PRICE TWO DOLLARS.

De l'Imprimerie de J.-B. Thounens' have come down to us, it may be that Thounens never actually had a press on St. Lucia; he possibly printed these almanacs for 1789 and 1790 either at Martinique, where the firm of Thounens & Vauchet published *The Friend of Liberty and the Enemy of Licentiousness*, a public journal, in 1791, or at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where B. J. Thounens [sic] & Compagnie printed at their office on Rue des Fronts-Forts in 1793 the *Journal Politique De Port-au-Prince et Affiches Americaines*.

### *Martinique*

Thounens was one of several printers working in the French islands. These printers and their newspapers proliferated in the years immediately following the outbreak of the revolution in France. For instance, Thomas notes that the *Gazette de la Martinique* had commenced publication at St. Pierre in December, 1784, and that it was printed by Pierre Richard, by permission of the government. 'At the commencement of the revolution in France', Thomas continues, 'presses under no control were set up, not only in the mother country, but in her colonies, from which were issued public journals of various kinds. The following appeared at Martinico:

'*The Friend of Liberty and the Enemy of Licentiousness*, published by Thounens & Vauchet in 1791;

'*Gazette National and Political*, from the press of J. B. Thounens, in St. Pierre, Printer to the People. In 1793 Thounens called himself Printer to the Committee of Safety, and to the Patriotic Society.—

'*Literary and Political Advertiser of Martinique*, printed in Port Royal by P. Richard & LaCadie. These printers then published the *Gazette de Martinique* in St. Pierre.'

Thomas also adds that 'in Trinity, on this island, in 1792, appeared a public journal from the press of X.Y.Z.'

### *Haiti*

The earliest printing that can be traced to Haiti today is *Memoire Pour le Comte de LaCroix, Capitaine des Vaisseaux, de Sa Majeste, Appellant & Demandeur, Contre Monsieur Jean-Baptiste-Francois de Latour*, which bears a colophon: Port-au-Prince, Bourdon [1789]. However, Thomas says that 'a royal printing house was established in Port-au-Prince...as early as 1750, in which, in 1750, was printed an account of a great earthquake, which happened at that time in the island. Among the other

WHERE AM I? HOW CAME I HERE?  
BY WHOSE POWER? AT WHAT TIME?

WHAT ARE MY WANTS?

WHAT ARE MY DUTIES?

THESE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ANSWERED  
FROM AN ELUCIDATION OF SACRED  
AND PROPHANE HISTORY: AND

F A I T H

EVINCED TO BE NECESSARY FOR AVERTING  
NATIONAL CALAMITY.

---

BY THE REVEREND

TEMPLE HENRY CROKER, M. A.

RECTOR OF ST JOHN'S, BASSETTERE, ST. CHRISTOPHER'S.

ANNO 'SALUTIS. 1790.

---

PRINTED FOR AND SOLD BY EDWARD LUTHER LOW,  
BASSETTERE, ST. CHRISTOPHER'S.

---

*Price* TWO DOLLARS.

1821

1787

34

L A W S

3

THE

OF THE

I S L A N D

*Act of the Honourable Legislature*

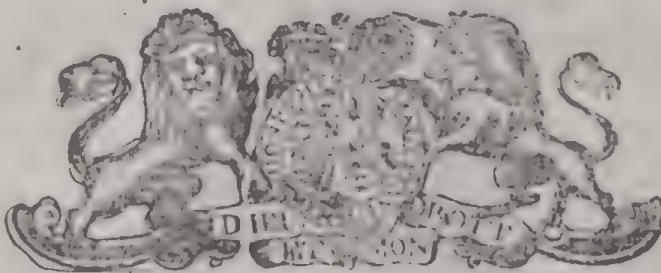
SAINT VINCENT

*and Vincent-Louis*

And its DEPENDENCIES;

From the first Establishment of a LEGISLATURE to the

End of the Year 1787.



SAINT VINCENT:

(By AUTHORITY of the LEGISLATURE)

Printed by JOSEPH BERROW.

M DCC LXXXVIII.

*Joseph Berrow*

# AVERTISSEMENT.

J. B. THOUNENS, Imprimeur du Roi à Castries, Isle Sainte-Lucie, invite MM. les Négocians, Marchands, Fabricans, &c. de la Martinique & autres Colonies de cet Archipel, & tous ceux qui auront quelque intérêt à se trouver placés dans ce répertoire, de lui faire passer leurs notices & leurs observations, dans le courant du mois d'Octobre de chaque année au plus tard; cette attention étant nécessaire, non-seulement pour la perfection de cet Ouvrage, mais aussi pour le Public, & pour chacun d'eux en particulier.

Plusieurs événemens ayant concouru, cette année, à en retarder l'impression, il espère d'être plus heureux les années suivantes, & de le livrer au Public, avec exactitude, tous les premiers jours de l'an. Il révisera aussi, dans la seconde édition, bien des fautes & omissions qui se sont glissées dans cette première, faute d'avoir reçu les notes nécessaires. Il recevra, avec reconnaissance, tous les avis qu'on voudra bien lui adresser à ce sujet.

Il a un magasin de Livres, dans lequel il a rassemblé les meilleurs Ouvrages. Il imprime aussi tout ce qui se présente, tels que Mémoires d'Avocats, Ouvrages de Bureaux, de Loges, &c. &c.; le tout au prix le plus modéré.

# ALMANACH HISTORIQUE, CHRONOLOGIQUE, DE COMMERCE, D'ARTS ET METIERS, POUR LES COLONIES,

*Précédé de l'Etat actuel de l'Administration,  
de la Justice & Police de Ste-Lucie;*

POUR L'ANNEE 1789.



A CASTRIES.

*Isle Ste-Lucie,*

De l'Imprimerie de J.-B. THOUNENS,  
Imprimeur privilégié du Roi.

*Avec Permission.*

St. Lucia, 1788-89, probably a faked imprint (actual size)

Vincent, 1788 (actual size)

works permitted to be printed at the king's press was a volume of memoirs of a literary institution of the colony. It was published in 1788.' Thomas also says that 'M. Mozard was a printer in Port-au-Prince in 1790, and for some time previous to that year.' Mozard was afterward consul for the French Republic in Boston, and Thomas says that 'he brought his portable press and several small fonts of type, Paris-made, with him, and sold them to John Mycall'.

Thomas once more is our authority for early newspaper printing at Haiti. He says a commercial gazette was published at Port-au-Prince 'by permission, before the revolution in France, of that on the island' and that in 1790 it was published by Bourdon, 'Printer to the King'. He also informs us that at Cap François there was a public paper containing marine intelligence, the orders of government, etc., which was published at the royal press, and that it was continued in 1790 by permission of the municipality. Batilliot et Compagnie printed in 1792 at Cap-Haitien *Proclamation, Au Nom De La Nation, De La Loi Et Du Roi. Etienne Polverel, Jean-Antoine Ailhaud, & Leger-Felicite Sonthonax...*

In 1804 the prefect of Guadeloupe forbade all American captains, under penalty of a \$200 fine, to introduce into that colony any newspapers, gazettes, or proclamations, from any part of the world whatsoever.

By 1814, the real beginnings of West Indian autonomy had taken place, and at Cap-Henry in Haiti in 1814 P. Roux printed *Refutation de la Lettre du General Francois Dauzion Lavaysse. Par le Chevalier de Prezeau...* Prezeau was secretary to H. M. Henry I, born Henry Christophe.

### *The Netherlands Antilles\**

The Netherlands Antilles consist of six islands in the Caribbean area: the Leeward Islands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao), where people generally speak Papiamentu, a mixture of Spanish, Dutch, English, and other elements originating in the eighteenth century, and the Windward Islands (St. Martin, Saba, and St. Eustace), where English is the common language. The islands are an autonomous and self-governing part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; hence Dutch is the official language. The southern half of Saint Martin is under French rule. A stretch of about 550 miles of ocean separates the Windward and Leeward groups.

The islands themselves are small and rather sparsely populated: Curaçao and Aruba have approximately 135,000 and 60,000 inhabitants respectively, mainly due to big oil refineries, but the remaining four islands have only a little over 10,000 inhabitants altogether (the French part of Saint Martin has another 5,000).

During the eighteenth century Saint Eustace was the most important and most prosperous of the islands. Lying on a busy shipping route connecting English, French, Danish, and Spanish colonies, the island prospered as port of call between present-day Venezuela and the British colonies in North America. During the American War of Independence Saint Eustace became a highly important centre of smuggling, handling a continuous flow of tropical products for the thirteen rebel colonies, and also powder and other war material. The island thus became known as 'The Golden Rock' until the British Admiral George Bridges Rodney occupied it in 1781 and thus put an end to smuggling. But as early as 1790 prosperity had recovered. About that time the earliest known piece of printing produced in the area was published: *The St. Eustatius Gazette*, a weekly of which only a few issues are extant. It seems probable that the first number appeared some time in March 1789: the latest known issue is dated 25 January 1793. Whether the publication was then discontinued is a matter of conjecture, though we know that the island's economy went downhill after 1794. As a matter of curiosity it should be mentioned that no printing office has worked on St. Eustace since.

The *Gazette* was, according to its own imprint, produced by 'Edward Luther Low, at his office, next to Mr. Henry H. Haffey's and nearly opposite Messrs. Hardmah & Clarkson's where all manner of printing is done with care and dispatch'. In

\* This section was contributed by Dr. J. Hartog, Aruba.

# ST. EUSTATIUS GAZETTE.

FRIDAY, AUGUST, 31, 1792.

For Sale, By The  
SUBSCRIBER,  
A Stolid man, who is  
an excellent Cook.

BARTHELEMY.  
St. Eustatius, Aug. 31, 1792.

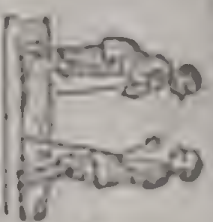
THE SUBSCRIBER takes this  
opportunity to acquaint every In-  
dividual, not to deliver any kind  
of Merchandise, Provision &c. to  
anyone but comes in his name,  
unless produced a written order  
signed by him, for the same ac-  
count, nor pay for the same.

CARL SCHMIDT.  
St. Eustatius, Aug. 31, 1792.

## FINAL NOTICE.

Sealed with a red wax, & the  
words CARL ORELLI, A. D. 1792.

RUN



AWAY

From AMSTERDAM to ST. EUSTATIUS.

TWO SAMBO BOYS, named  
Julius and Phineas, (found  
on this Island) both Tawny  
complexion, with various very  
much, speak good English and  
are very fond of dress, they were  
formerly the property of the Hon.  
Alexander Hesther deceased, their  
father and Mother are both free,  
the former is Julius Tyne of this  
Island, and the latter is called Au-  
gustus Dillion, living in St. Thomas,  
where it is supposed they have  
escaped to. A reward of TWO  
DOLLARS, for each will be given for  
apprehending them, and if you  
find the above names good & true.

To the Public,

TOWARDS HOTEL, is re-  
served a room for the Slave of  
Mons. Mithet and Co. to chat  
freely supplied by Richard D.  
Sennings Esq. The advantage of  
this apartment for them,  
is that the numerous attendance  
which will be given to all persons  
concerned in public to whom  
he offers with gratitude thanks  
for their past favours, will, he  
hopes for are to him a continuance  
of their esteem.

St. Eustatius, Aug. 24- 1792.

Martins de Clarencieux,

Master of the Ship.

Madeira Onions,

at 4 Dollars per Cwt.

St. Eustatius, Aug. 24. 1792.

the later numbers the words ' & Company' were added to Edward Luther Low's name. Very little is known about this Edward Low, who may have come from St. Kitts.\*

The contents of the *Gazette* (a broadside measuring 45 × 27 cm, 18½" × 10½") are not staggering. Quite a number of advertisements occur, some in Dutch but most of them in English. An example of the latter:

Run away last night my wife, Bridget Coole; she is a tight neat body, and has lost one leg. She was seen riding behind the priest of the parish through Termoy, and we never was (*sic*) married. I will pay no debt that she does contract; she lisps with one tooth and is always talking about Fairies, and is of no use but to the owner.

Rhelim Coole.

Though printing arrived in St. Eustace over twenty years earlier than in Curaçao, it came much later than on other islands in the Caribbean area.

Between 1807 and 1816, during the Napoleonic occupation of the Netherlands, Curaçao was under British rule. In a letter of 16 February 1808 from the deputy governor Robert Nicholas to the governor-designate Sir James Cockburn, Nicholas suggests that Sir James bring not only household goods from England but also a printing press for his official publications. It seems unlikely that Sir James followed this advice: the earliest known piece of Curaçao printing is dated 1812.

On Maundy Thursday 1812 (26 March) the city of Caracas, in present-day Venezuela, was destroyed by an earthquake. After the disaster a Scotch printer working there, William Lee, moved his equipment to Curaçao to set up as a printer there. He may have had political motives as well: just then the province of Venezuela was involved in a war of independence against Spain, and Lee who was also a pamphleteer may have backed the wrong horse. According to the documents an English printing shop existed in Curaçao in 1812, but Lee's name is not mentioned. But then he was only 26 years of age.

Anyway, Lee set up shop in the Heerenstraat—then and now the main street of Willemstad—and began publication of *The Curaçao Gazette and Commercial Advertiser* on 11 December 1812. Thus Curaçao was the last of the main islands in the area

\* Cf. p. 30.

to have its own printing press, well after Jamaica (1717?) Martinique (1727), and Santo Domingo (1750).

*The Curaçao Gazette* proudly proclaims William Lee as 'printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty'. When the colony returned under Dutch rule in 1816, Lee was permitted to carry on his business; the *Gazette* was consequently renamed *De Curaçaosche Courant*; it exists as a weekly to the present day. It is now a semi-official publication, privately owned, that prints all government publications.

Lee married a local girl in 1822, but died the next year. His widow carried on for another ten years and then sold the shop to two of her employees, A. L. Statius Muller and J. F. Neuman. Their descendants owned the business until 1908, when it passed into the hands of the Gorsira family, the present owners. They remained at the Heerenstraat premises until 1929, then moved a couple of times and finally took a modern building in 1950 at a new street, aptly named William Lee-straat. The firm is now the biggest graphic enterprise on the island.

From announcements in *De Curaçaosche Courant* we know that in its earlier years the firm used to print and publish books, mainly of a religious nature, but not a single copy of these has survived.

A highly curious piece of Curaçao printing dates back to 1825. According to its Papiamentu title, *Declaracion corticu di catecismo pa uso di catholica di Curaçao, pa M. J. Niewindt, prefecto apostolico di Mision di Curaçao Ao 1825*, it contains a short Roman Catholic catechism (of 16 pages), very primitively printed. It is possible that Niewindt, who was a priest and head of the mission, owned a small handpress and printed the booklet himself. No other productions by him are known and the *Declaracion corticu* is extant in one copy only.

Monsignor Niewindt was certainly active as a printer some time later: in 1843 he established a printing office at Barber. Though it is known that from the documents in the episcopal archives, that three journeymen worked there in 1853, not a single copy of any production is known. In 1871 or 1872 the shop was moved to Willemstad and in 1884 came into the hands of Augustín Bethencourt (see below).

The Roman-Catholic mission established another printing shop in 1848. This was the result of an initiative of another priest, Jacobus J. Putman, who had been working among the rural population and slaves in Santa Rosa, in the interior, since 1837. In 1848 he went to Holland and returned with printing equipment and a qualified

printer, Johannes G. van Herpen. Between them they produced a number of simple schoolbooks, many of which are kept in the Episcopal Archives. The activity of this printing shop seems to have petered out a few years after Putman finally returned to Holland in 1853.

The first modern printing office of Curaçao was established in 1860 by Augustín Bethencourt who was born on the Canary Islands. As a young man he emigrated to Venezuela where he lived for nineteen years. He then wanted to repatriate and went to Curaçao to find out when he could sail. But instead he stayed on the island and started a bookshop, soon followed by a printing office equipped with American machinery. His business was later styled *Bethencourt & Hijos* (Bethencourt & Sons) and the Bethencourts developed a vast activity. They printed books and periodicals for local use, but also for the South American continent. They started Curaçao's first daily in 1879. Their printing office existed until 1933, when it was done away with; their bookshop has been thriving to the present day.

Printing only came to the island of Aruba at the end of the nineteenth century; no printing facilities existed on the other islands until 1964, when a printing service was established on St. Martin.

### *Conclusion*

It remains only to note a few peculiar aspects of West Indian printing history. Although there is evidence that Negroes were sometimes used in printing houses in colonies on the American mainland, we suspect that the practice was even more common in the West Indies. Cundall in his monograph on early Jamaican printing cites a specific instance. In 1794, he noted, when Alexander Aikman was printing for the Jamaica House of Assembly 200 copies of its minutes he notified a committee of the house that he planned to go to England and that while he was there, in order to 'give the impression all the beauty and elegance of which it is susceptible', he would 'secure a white pressman for its superintendence, that part of the business being executed here by Negroes'.

If there was one thing which distinguished the press in the West Indies from the press in the British colonies on the mainland of America during the eighteenth century it was their different attitudes on subservience to authority. On the mainland the Stamp Act, which quite literally threatened the very existence of newspapers, was like a stone thrown into a hornets' nest; the great majority of newspaper publishers, having been stirred up, never quieted down again, and instead they kept buzzing with rebellion until the War of the Revolution had been begun.

The situation in the West Indies was quite different, and this difference lay mainly in what may be described as the newspaper market. On the mainland a newspaper could find plenty of subscribers among those we call today the common people—farmers, sailors, workingmen, and tradespeople—whose liberties were being infringed by the various acts and taxes passed by the Parliament. And, since the rich merchants engaged in commerce were also hard hit by these Parliamentary measures, they, too, were not inclined to cancel their subscriptions to newspapers which advocated opposition to the policies of the British Ministry.

But, in the West Indies there were almost no common people in the sense that we would construe that term, and the planter aristocracy felt that many of the acts passed in the Mother Country were designed to help the planters rather than to hurt them. Furthermore, West Indian society was top-heavy with privileged officials, ardently loyal to the Crown because it was from the Crown that they derived their power. Parenthetically it may be stated that only in the British West Indies was there anything even vaguely resembling a free press; elsewhere in the area the printing privilege was conferred and regulated by government. Nevertheless, in the Brit-

ish West Indies a little pressure was all that was needed to bring any rebellious newspaper or printer into line. It is true that Alexander Shipton, the Antiguan printer, put out his newspaper on unstamped paper during the Stamp Act crisis, but since there was no stamped paper available this can hardly have been an act of civil disobedience. On the other hand, John Luffman, in his *A Brief Account of the Island of Antigua*, printed at London in 1788, reports an interesting case of how quickly freedom of the press could be stifled there.

'This Island', he wrote, 'issues three weekly newspapers, namely the *Antigua Chronicle*, the *Antigua Gazette*, and the *Antigua Journal*; I wish that I could say that any one of them was free, but freedom, alas! doth not extend her influence to this place. The first mentioned of these prints attempted, very lately, to break the bonds of venality and put forth a motto, which gave flattering hopes of success, but some letters which exposed the impositions practiced in conducting a part of the public business, and other letters supposed to effect the feelings of a man in office, by exposing his amours, his ridiculous attachments, and his self-created consequences, appearing therein; certain persons, thirty-three in number, some of whom having weight in the island, and others of no weight at all, put their names to a paper which they sent by a messenger (one of those who had signed it) to the printer's office, the purport of which was that they, the undersigned, would withdraw their subscriptions, if such letters were not discontinued. This dreadful intimidation had the desired effect; notwithstanding several public spirited men offered to make up the deficiency to the printer, by additional payments; but he having recently suffered severely, from the power of the man whose follies the last mentioned letters were supposed to have lashed, thought it most prudent to stop their further publication. Thus was done away the liberty of the press, in this island, to the disgrace of those who were the cause of it, as dupes to the artifices of ostentation and chicanery, and the *Antigua Chronicle* has now sunk into that nothingness (which had already pervaded the other two) suitable to the genius of arrogance, folly, and despotism.'

Samuel Keimer also had a brush with authority, as early as 1733, when he was presented to the grand jury of the island for publishing in his *Barbadoes Gazette* 'a defamatory libel on Mr. Adams, one of the King's Council'. The attorney general decided that there was no basis for criminal prosecution, but it is perhaps indicative of the official attitude toward the press in the islands at that time that Keimer was nonetheless bound by the authorities to keep the peace for six months, and thus was,

in effect, placed on probation for having done something which was not held to be actionable under the law.

As if it was not enough to be thus ham-strung by the authorities, Keimer faced the usual trouble of having subscribers who did not pay their bills. This caused him to compose and print a 'sorrowful lamentation' in verse, inspired by 'those would-be thought gentlemen, who have long taken this paper, and never paid for it, and seem never to design to pay for it'. Incidentally, other cases of printers having trouble collecting from their subscribers could be presented, but this was undoubtedly not an ailment confined to the West Indies.

Nor did the products of the West Indies presses differ markedly from those in the mainland colonies—if those examples which have survived the ravages of time, earthquakes, fires, hurricanes, insects, and the general easy-going tenor of life in the tropics can be considered a fair sample.

Considering the surviving printed matter from the Caribbean, the one thing the scholar notes is the comparative scarcity of sermons and religious tracts, and the relatively high ratio of belles lettres; on all other counts the press there put forth much the same sort of thing that the mainland press did.

In the West Indies the few religious writings which appeared were generally related to the slavery question, while in New England, for instance, the religious writings which poured from the press were very often abstruse theological writings. Now and then in New England a catastrophe or a natural phenomenon was reported, but generally the event was taken as the inspiration for a sermon in which it was interpreted as an act of Divinity. In the West Indies such events were noticed in the pulpits, too, as witness the writings printed both in the islands and in London relating to such a memorable calamity as the earthquake of 1692. As late as 1800 there was printed at Jamaica a little work entitled *A Form of Prayer to be used in the Island of Jamaica, for a perpetual Fast established by Law, on the seventh day of June, in commemoration of the dreadful earthquake in the year 1692*.

It was only natural that the West Indies press should have produced a considerable body of writings on medical problems peculiar to the tropics. Although the islands have sometimes been confused with paradise, everyone seems to have been sick there, of one disease or another. It is not surprising therefore that the third title issuing from Thomas Smith's Antiguan press was the reprint of a London work on medicine written by John Theobald.

At Jamaica it was the same story, only more so. That island had its own prolific writer on medical subjects, Dr. Thomas Dancer. He and every other army surgeon who accompanied any of the numerous expeditionary forces operating in the Caribbean seem to have felt constrained to publish some sort of report on the medical problems they faced. Benjamin Moseley wrote about the prevention and cure of dysentery among the troops, J. F. Nembhard wrote a treatise on the nature and cure of yaws, and two Jamaican doctors, John Williams and Parker Bennett, entered into such an acrimonious dispute over treatment for the bilious or yellow fever that they finally fought a duel in which both of them were killed.

The bulk of the tracts on the slavery question published on the West Indies presses were, as might be suspected, answers to abolitionist proposals originating in the Mother Country and printed at London, but there was also some West Indian printing which took the side of the abolitionists. Typical of the defenders of slavery as an institution was Colonel Samuel Martin, who wrote *An Essay on Plantership*. He was supposed to have been an efficient planter and a benevolent master to more than 300 slaves. He urged planters to treat their field-hands with tenderness and generosity. He himself freed many of his slaves during his lifetime and set others free under his will. This attitude may have been a reaction to a tragic event of his boyhood, for when he was ten or eleven years old his father had been murdered by his own slaves on Christmas Day, 1701.

Other than a couple of plantership books, not many how-to-do-it works were printed in the West Indies in the early years. The books printed at Jamaica go into methods of rum and sugar manufacture, but probably any improvements in such processes were kept secret as long as possible, rather than published in printed form.

It is not surprising that in a slave society there should have been leisure for those interested in composing poems or writing history, and both these forms of belles lettres are fairly prevalent in West Indian printing of an early date. We have, for instance, four books of poetry and an English grammar printed at Antigua in the eighteenth century. At Jamaica Bryan Edwards wrote histories and poems. His famous history of the British West Indies went through five editions in rapid succession.

Aside from newspapers, however, the printers depended upon government business, the usual run of printed blank forms, and such stock items of the printing trade as almanacs to make up the backbone of their output. Some of them doubtless

operated small businesses in imported goods to make ends meet if they were not so fortunate as to be appointed the government's printer. However they did it, the printers of the West Indies seem to have survived and to have carried the press and its products throughout these far-flung islands.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR – Bradford F. Swan was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, U.S.A., in 1907, and is a graduate of Yale (A.B. 1930). He was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in 1966 by Rhode Island College. He is a member of The Bibliographical Society, the Bibliographical Society of America, American Antiquarian Society, Associates of the John Carter Brown Library, the Grolier Club, and the Club of Odd Volumes. He has been the John Carter Brown Library Associates' lecturer (on printing in the British West Indies) and is a trustee of the Yale Library Associates. He is president of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

Dr. Swan is the theatre and art critic for the *Providence Journal*. In addition to his newspaper and magazine articles he published *Gregory Dexter of London and New England* (1949), *The Diary of Samuel Rodman* (1928), *Captain Alexander Winsor* (1941), *A Bibliography of Henry Blake Fuller* (1930), *The Case of Richard Chasmore* (1944), *Roger Williams' Answer to John Easton* (1945), *Roger Williams' Answer to Mr. Coddington's Letter* (1946), *A Checklist of Early Printing on the Island of Antigua* (1956), *The Ruysch Map of the World* (1950), *The First Printing in Providence* (1951), *Trip Leadership in the White Mountains* (1959), *An Indian's An Indian* (1959), and *The Historic Huts of the Antarctic* (1961). He is the continuing editor of several sections of *The White Mountain Guide Book*, published by the Appalachian Mountain Club, and has contributed numerous articles to *Rhode Island History*. He has been engaged for several years in editing the complete letters of Roger Williams and in preparing additions and corrections to John Alden's *Rhode Island Imprints 1727-1800*.

ABOUT THE EDITOR – Colin Clair, who began his career as author and journalist in Paris, was, on his return to England, for many years on the staff of the Encyclopaedia Department of the Amalgamated Press. During the Second World War he was sent to various parts of Africa, first as a staff reporter on a national newspaper, and later as a member of the French Service of the Ministry of Information. After the war he travelled extensively in Argentina, Poland, and the Near East before settling down in London to the steady routine of authorship combined with editorial activities.

His interest in printing was first aroused when as a young man he visited the Plantin-Moretus Museum at Antwerp. This led him eventually to write the first biography in English of the famous printer Christophe Plantin. A member of the Bibliographical Society, London, Colin Clair has contributed articles on the history of printing to journals in various countries. Among his books are *A History of Printing in Britain* and a *Chronology of Printing and Publishing*. He is now preparing for future publication a *History of Printing in Europe*.

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